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# MEMORIAL ADDRESS

AT

# LANCASTER.

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GEN$^{L}$ FRANCIS WASHBURN.

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# MEMORIAL ADDRESS,

AT

# LANCASTER,

MAY 29, 1880.

BY

JOHN D. WASHBURN.

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Worcester, Mass.
PRESS OF CHARLES HAMILTON.
1880.

This Address, which was delivered on Memorial Day, before an audience comprising not only the Members of Lancaster Post and Present Residents of the Town, but many Companions of former days, with their Children, is, by request, privately printed.

J. D. W.

# ADDRESS.

You will not ask me, in this presence and on this day of reverent memorial and thanksgiving, to discuss the questions, important though they are, of the origin and frame-work of our government and the issues involved in our late war, or to state exactly what was fought for, exactly what attained, what rights were secured, what were left in doubt and peril, unestablished still, though years have rolled by since the foundation of their establishment was laid amid tumult, sacrifice and tears. Elsewhere, at other times and with different surroundings, I have had occasion to present such views as I might of the duty of the citizen to a country redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled, yet wherein some of the dearest rights of man still fail of full and final recognition, guaranty and protection. These were the questions of yesterday, and when another Christian Sabbath, whose peaceful meditations even questions of the political rights of man may not disturb, shall have passed, they shall be those of days and weeks and months and years to come, till every right of freemen shall have been secured and vindicated

throughout the length and breadth of this fair and sunny land.

But for this day, the rest and Sabbath of tender and sacred memory, even questions of present duty and the rights of man are too harsh and material. They shall not violate the peace of the affections, or ruffle the serener air of grateful love and tender recollection, which we breathe to-day. How bald and barren political philosophy, so fascinating and tempting to discussion in ordinary seasons, in this hour of personal and affectionate remembrance! Even the great cause for which these fought, the triumph of free government in our land, so grand, so imposing, so often the theme of our discourse, charms less the mind and heart on this Memorial Day, than loving memories of those, our friends, our neighbors and our brothers, who died that our lives might be blessed and our freedom full.

No! whatever may be said elsewhere or by others, no abstract themes can occupy my mind or voice at this hour. For I stand among the familiar forms and faces of my boyhood, and faces too which, not themselves familiar, yet shine by nature's wondrous reproductive power with the light of other days. On yonder memorial tablet are inscribed the names, not only of my nearest kindred, but of playmates of my childhood and loved companions of my youth. Every rock and hill-side has for me some

memory of school-days with some of our patriot dead, not less than of the survivors of those fields of glory and renown, and scarce a tree within the range of vision from the green, whose leaves are not vocal with memories of early friendships and youthful joy. Here we chased the rolling circle's speed, and there we drove the flying ball. We probed the sides and summit of yonder hill for mäcles, the jewel of our native mine, and vexed the sparkling waters of the Nashaway with persistent tireless angle, and threaded with bare and venturesome feet its shining shoals. There is scarce a game of boyhood which I have not played with one at least of them upon this green, and of the others, besides those nearest to me and of my name, some were schoolmates, some pupils of my early days, obedient to my peaceful boyish sway. And as their shadowy forms arise and draw near from the dim recesses of that earlier day, only pleasant memories come with them, of common daily pursuits, of simple delights and genuine joys, of companionship kindly, equal, free. For of more than one of them can I say, hardly trespassing on the limits of imagination in adopting the classic words of Lycidas,—

—"We were nursed upon the the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds his sultry horn."

And this band of school-fellows, townsmen, companions, friends, was divided. The quiet honorable labors of the home and farm held some, the livelier call of business and active life drew others, the shaded walks of the University a few. And when the cry of our country, the stricken mother of us all, went out for help to her loyal sons, these brave boys of ours, with companions not less brave, went forth to defend her—and at the great roll-call after she had been delivered safe from all that peril, as the name of each one of these was read, the answer came from other lips than theirs, "Dead on the field of honor."

And now at length fifteen years have passed since those alternating hopes and fears, heart- nay, life-consuming trial, joyous expectation and overwhelming sorrow, culminated in the salvation of our country—years which at their beginning it seemed could never pass, so heavily the days of recent sacrifice and sorrow dragged along. Would time ever bring its healing balm? Would the first year ever end, in which our loved ones died? And could a decade ever be complete? Hard indeed would it have been in those early years to stand here and speak of those loved and departed ones with tearless eyes. Well might the grief-laden heart seek refuge in abstractions, or find relief in the discussion of the details of systems of administration and theories and forms

of government, and political rights of man, "the sad mechanic exercise like dull narcotics numbing pain." But now, with lapse of years, comes power to deal in tenderer thought and speech.

What, then—has sorrow died? Mournful indeed were it, if we could cease to mourn.

> "No—mixed with all this mystic frame
> Her deep relations are the same—
> But with long use her tears are dry."

Time, with his gentle touch, though he may never hide the scar, and we can never forget, yet heals our wound. To sounds of grief no longer mingling as before, succeed the notes of honor, gratitude and pride, and we stand not bound and stricken as at first, but the proud mothers, fathers and brothers of heroes who won and wear an immortal crown. The keen pang of suffering grief assuaged, we calmly contemplate their glory—how in their life's short day they reaped more of honor than a hoary age of commonplace could bring — how a patriot's death was a richer meed to them than length of days—how high their privilege to grasp and attain in the prime of their early manhood and beauty life's greatest, noblest end. What! compare three-score years and ten, of buying, selling, tilling, toiling, accumulation, honorable but petty strivings, with their exultant triumph and immortal joy? Their sacrifice! Nay, ours — who

lost the hero's name and plod our homely way, while they walk with martyrs and among the stars! They dead! who went forth, not to the night and darkness, but to bright and endless day, while to the saner mind

"We rather seem the dead who staid behind."

For us remain the trivial round, the daily task, our useful toil and destiny obscure—praiseworthy, if we so school our spirits as not to envy those who, starting with no greater hope in life than ours, yet attained in the very morning of their day the fulfilment of the poet's lofty aspiration—

"To pass, when life its light withdraws
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Or in a merely selfish cause.

In some good cause, not in mine own
To perish, wept for, honored, known
And like a warrior overthrown,

Whose eye is dim with glorious tears
When, soiled with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears.

Then, dying of a mortal stroke
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

Seeing thus what their life attained through such a close as this, well may we, rejoicing in that life, rejoice in that death not less, with solemn, religious and transcendent joy.

How often have I said not only upon occasion from the platform to an assembly of fellow-citizens, but to myself, in wandering about the various countries of the world, and contrasting the opportunities of other lands with ours, that the hope of America is in her youth,—their opportunity, their character and their aspiration. And in nothing is their opportunity more fortunate than this—that they may look for the brightest examples of heroic deeds, not to romance and the chronicles of ancient time, but to the history of their own country, the leaves of their family Bibles and the records of their own towns. And this I make the lesson of the hour and this Memorial Day, that our children be taught to look on these tablets, and tablets like these, for the names of heroes, that they be taught the nature of the cause these fought for and the detailed history of the great conflict, that they find their high examples and illustrations here, that not only the great cause for which these men died, but their individual names and deeds be made and kept familiar here, and that, if not preferred in honor above all other heroes, they at least be not surpassed or overshadowed. And always on Memorial Day, would I exalt not merely the cause, and the achievements of our country's arms, but chiefly the personality and memory of these our boys who died.

How tawdry, in comparison with their modest

glory, the fame of heroes and demi-gods to whose creation and celebration the noblest imaginations of antiquity have contributed, and who live in the verses of famous poets for all time. The great Epic poet of the ages sang the wrath of Achilles, and the unnumbered woes to Greece of which it was the spring. Yet what is there in the character of Achilles, as the poet portrays it, rude, wrathful, ungovernable, "Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer," to be compared, as a standard for youthful emulation with some one, nay many, of these modest heroes of ours, who bravely dared, and patiently endured, not in vindication of their own personal and fancied wrong, but in the defence of their country's honor and life?

And in verse which has hardly less claim to immortality than that of Homer, the great Epic poet of Rome transmits to all after time the pious Aeneas, bright in his shining armor and glittering plumes of barbaric pride. Yet with not less of piety and filial love, arrayed in the brighter armor of Christian principle and purpose, and in a cause based on that principle and purpose, heroes went forth to battle from these quiet homes of ours, whose recorded names tell of higher aims and more unselfish deeds.

See how in feats of arms the highest individual achievements of the past are rivalled in the unwritten

glory of these memorial stones. What student of Roman History has not thrilled with the ecstacy of emotion, as he read in the terse and vivid narrative of Livy the story of Horatius, and how, against fearful odds of battle he held at bay the army of Lars Porsena, about to overwhelm the sacred city? Macaulay too sings the story in his sparkling lay, and our ingenuous youth learn by heart in early childhood

> "How Horatius kept the bridge
> In the brave days of old."

The stately prose of Livy rises into almost poetic rapture as he describes that glorious deed:

"Vadit inde in primum aditum pontis, insignesque inter conspecta cedentium pugnae terga, obversis cominus ad incundum praelium armis, ipso miraculo audaciae obstupefecit hostes."

The common consent of mankind has pronounced this one of the most dramatic situations in all history. Yet the bald, even cold, narration of how a boy of ours, not braver but with more conspicuous opportunity than the rest, held the Bridge against the flower of Lee's army in the closing hours of the great rebellion, with a courage which won the admiration of both armies, and the enthusiastic praise of the illustrious commander-of all the armies of the North, reveals qualities as high, patriotism as fervent, and self-devotion as complete as those which

made the name of Horatius a household word through all the ages.

Nor will any one say that, referring thus to one so near me, I selfishly avail myself of the courtesy of the hour to exalt my own. Here in this little circle, the pride of one is the pride of all. All these fought bravely, and as bravely died, animated by the same high purpose, with hearts as warm and glowing with the same generous flame, as faithful and true where the field of service gave opportunity, as ready to die in any, every hour, if so the nation live.

These are the men in whose personal honor we assemble to-day, and shall on Memorial Day through time to come, "that our posterity may also know them, and the children that are yet unborn." Nor those only who fell, but the comrades also who dared with them, and whom the God of battles spared to home and friends and country. Theirs too the march, the watch, the bivouac, the sicknesses, the fastings. They too lay in the trenches and stormed the heights, and from squalid prison-pens, their heavy, longing eyes followed the birds on their Northern flight beyond the din of battle and the smoke of roaring batteries, towards homes they might never again behold.

Honor to the living! Our grateful thanks await them, and not alone on the annual return of this

Memorial Day, but on every day and in every place, shall the tribute of gratitude, silent or expressed, be paid. No fault of theirs that their spirits walk not now with those of their companions gone before. United in the lofty and loyal purpose of their lives, in death were they divided. And that death these survivors braved in wasting march, malarial camp and battle's wildest storm. Cheered in their daily life by the grateful recognition of their fellow-men, consoled in present privation by proud and happy consciousness of loftiest duty done, even their solitude is peopled with real though shadowy forms, the loved, the trusted and the brave who passed behind the veil.

And blessed be the memory of the dead ! There's not a breathing of the common wind that shall forget them, and the hymns of a regenerated and united country shall tell of their glory and undying fame.

A few weeks after the delivery of this address the following appeared in the *New York Evening Post.* It is reprinted here, not only as tending to show that in the personal reference of the address fraternal affection had not exaggerated, but also in grateful acknowledgment of its author's tribute of loving admiration:—

### THE CHARGE OF "THE FOURTH CAVALRY."

---

DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO FELL ON THE SIXTH OF APRIL, 1865.

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[The Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, or rather a small portion of its rank and file, but with most of its field and staff officers, and led by its Colonel, FRANCIS WASHBURN, formed part of the advance, which, to use Gen. GRANT'S words in his last general report of the war, "heroically attacked and detained the head of Lee's column near Farmville, Va., until its commanding general was killed and his small force overpowered." Less than a thousand men, all told, without any artillery, held in check for a considerable time, when every moment almost was worth an empire, a rebel force outnumbering them ten to one. Of the twelve Fourth Cavalry officers who went into the fight eight were killed and wounded, including their gallant leader. He lived to reach his home, and die in his mother's arms.]

Onward they dash:
It mattered not the toilsome march,
The foeman's cannon crash;
Their souls were in their swords,
Their steeds beneath one throb;
Onward they charge,
The grave's disdain to rob!

Many or few?
"Six hundred?" nay; that were a host
Beside this band so true.
Four score of trusty arms
Against an army lined.
Ah! weep with us
The comrades left behind!

I see them still:
Down deep ravine, then up "to form"
On battle-shaken hill;
One word is all enough,
One waving blade their light
Into the hordes
Of rebel-raging fight.

He at their head
A knight, a paladin of old,
A hero—honor led,
And fibred with the faith
Of ages won to God—
O what to him
The soaked and waiting sod!

O sweet is it
For love of land to do and die;
The heart-strings heaven-knit,
Relaxed from tensest strain
Upon His arm to rest
In whom alone
Is earthly conflict blest!

And shall not we—
Survivors of the martyred brave,
By tears and blood made free—
Give what they gladly gave?
Yes! by the loved and lost,
Most sacred hold
Our country's priceless cost.

A. Z. G.

*Inscription on the Tablet in Memorial Hall.*

## THAT OUR POSTERITY MAY ALSO KNOW THEM,

AND THE CHILDREN THAT ARE YET UNBORN.

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GEORGE WRIGHT CUTLER, OCTOBER 21, 1861. 23.
WILLARD RAYMOND LAWRENCE, OCTOBER, 21, 1861. 28.
JAMES GARDNER WARNER, OCTOBER 21, 1861. 31.
LUTHER GERRY TURNER, NOVEMBER 1, 1861. 24.
FRANKLIN HAWKES FARNSWORTH, MAY 31, 1862. 19.
JAMES BURKE, SEPTEMBER 1, 1862. 26.
ROBERT ROBERTS MOSES, OCTOBER 3, 1862. 26.
EBENEZER WATERS RICHARDS, DECEMBER 13, 1862. 37.
GEORGE LEE THURSTON, DECEMBER 15, 1862. 31.
HENRY MAYNARD PUTNEY, APRIL 28, 1863. 20.
DAVID WILDER JONES, MAY 3, 1863. 46.
JAMES DILLON, MAY 10, 1863. 26.
CHARLES TIMOTHY FAIRBANKS. JUNE 19, 1863. 27.
HENRY ALBERT CUTLER, JULY 9, 1863. 19.
OSCAR FRARY, JULY 28, 1863. 27.
STEPHEN ADAMS KEYES, AUGUST 10, 1863. 19.
WALTER ANDREW BROOKS, AUGUST 22, 1863. 26.
JOHN PATRICK WISE, MARCH 15, 1864. 19.
JOHN CHICKERING HAYNES, MARCH 19, 1864. 30.
STEPHEN WESLEY GRAY, APRIL 4, 1864. 32.
JAMES ANDREW BRIDGE, MAY 15, 1864. 21.
HENRY JACKSON PARKER, MAY, 15, 1864. 28.
SUMNER RUSSELL KILBURN, MAY 16, 1864. 21.
SOLON WHITING CHAPLIN, JUNE 5, 1864. 40.
WILLIAM DUSTIN CARR, JUNE 20, 1864. 40.
SAMUEL MIRICK BOWMAN, JULY 26, 1864. 28.
CALEB WOOD SWEET, AUGUST 3, 1864. 23.
EDWARD RICHMOND WASHBURN, SEPTEMBER 5, 1864. 28.
HORATIO ELISHA TURNER, SEPTEMBER 8, 1864. 20.
WILLIAM SCHUMACHER, SEPTEMBER 13, 1864. 22.
FREDERICK FORDYCE NOURSE, SEPTEMBER 13, 1864. 22.
GEORGE WALTON DIVOLL, SEPTEMBER 21, 1864. 37.
JOHN LOUIS MOEGLEN, SEPTEMBER 28, 1864. 53.
OREN HODGMAN, SEPTEMBER 30, 1864. 21.
LUKE OLLIS, OCTOBER 13, 1864. 21.
FORDYCE HORAN, NOVEMBER, 3, 1864. 21.
FRANCIS HENRY FAIRBANKS, JANUARY 4, 1865. 30.
EDWARD RUSSELL JOSLYN, APRIL 10, 1865. 21.
FRANCIS WASHBURN, APRIL 22, 1865. 26.

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IN THE SIGHT OF THE UNWISE THEY SEEMED TO DIE,
AND THEIR DEPARTURE WAS TAKEN FOR MISERY,
AND THEIR GOING FROM US TO BE UTTER DESTRUCTION:
BUT THEY ARE IN PEACE.